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TAGS: [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [UNDP](#) [UNGA](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: NORWAY: DISTRACTED DRIVING DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: SECSTATE 06703

¶1. On February 8 PolOff provided Ministry of Transport (MoT) Deputy Director for Traffic Security and Emergency John Arild Jenssen reftel points and Pol LES confirmed with MoT Advisor Marcel Henri Godonou that the information collected by post on Norwegian cell phone use laws was correct and up-to-date. No decision has been made on Norwegian attendance at the UN Road Safety Collaboration meeting in New York in March.

Existing laws

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¶2. The GoN follows a 2000 law stating that drivers of motor vehicles must not use mobile phones while driving unless the mobile phone is placed in an acceptably installed holder, i.e. mounted in the immediate vicinity of the wheel and as close to the driver's field of vision as practical. Cell phone use is defined as "all operation of the mobile phone's keypad, calling, receiving calls and receiving or sending of messages or texts." Norway does not have official statistics on cell phone use and traffic accidents. One report published in 2008 by the Norwegian Public Roads Administration (NPRA) details vehicular fatalities, injuries, and crashes, but cell phone use is left out of the study. NPRA Chief Engineer Richard Muskaug told Pol LES February 5 that Norwegian police do not investigate cell phone usage prior to an accident because such use is difficult to detect.

Nationwide Awareness Campaigns and Research

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¶3. NPRA has not funded a nationwide awareness campaign concerning the dangers of cell phone use while driving. In 2006 and 2008, radio channels provided commercial air time free of charge to the Norwegian Council for Road Safety on consequences of cell phone use while driving.

¶4. A study on the effectiveness of the 2000 law was presented in 2008 by the Institute of Transport Economics. In their report, called "Telephones in Traffic," they concluded that the Norwegian law on cell phone use was outdated and found that many people misunderstand or lacked awareness on using hands-free equipment in the car. While the 2000 law requires drivers to install cell phone holders in the vehicle, it fails to address options provided by current Bluetooth technology. According to an article on The Norwegian Council for Road Safety's website, the Ministry of Transportation has asked NPRA to assess existing regulations. According to the Ministry of Transportation the law will likely be revised sometime in the future.

¶5. Data collected in 1996 by the Institute of Transport Economics showed that 51 percent of the population used cell phones while driving. The study also showed that there were more males than females and younger people than older that used cell phones while driving. A similar study from 1998 by the same research institute

showed that 80 percent of drivers who were using cell phones while driving used handheld phones – and only 20 percent used hands free sets.

Police Intensifying Efforts to Detect Cell Phone Use

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¶6. The chief of the National Mobile Police Service Roar Skjelbred Olsen told Pol LES February 5 that the police have lately intensified their routine vehicle checks and use binoculars to see if drivers are using cell phones, resulting in an increased number of fines issued. Over seventeen thousand fines were handed out in 2009, a significant increase from the 12,832 fines served in 2008; each fine costs the driver USD 220.

WHITE